

# Speaker Ryan: Talks tax reform, civil society at WisPolitics Q&A

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## Speaker Ryan talks tax reform, civil society at WisPolitics Q&A

Last week, Speaker Ryan joined WisPolitics President Jeff Mayers in the Rayburn Room of the U.S. Capitol for a conversation on tax reform, his tenure as speaker, and the state of civil society. You can watch the full discussion [here](#), or catch some highlights from the the event below:

### On tax reform:

*"It's what I worked on for 18 years on the Ways and Means Committee, and it's something I've been working on since before I was a member of Congress. I've long believed we needed to overhaul the U.S. tax system if we're going to get faster economic growth—if we're going to be globally competitive. We did that, and **exactly what we were hoping would happen is happening**: much [faster economic growth](#), faster [wage growth](#), jobless rate at a [49-year high](#), the lowest Latino unemployment rate in history, we had [great wage data](#) just come out the other day, and more importantly: internationally, there's no reason not to be an American company anymore because of our tax laws.*

### On his time as speaker:

*"I am really honored to have had this job. I am honored to have been able to get our team to put together an agenda, to take it to the country, then to have unified government, and the opportunity to put [this agenda](#) in place...We got [tax reform](#) done, we got regulatory relief done, we [rebuilt the military](#), we [overhauled the VA](#), we got [career and technical education](#) done, we got the [poverty](#) stuff I've been working for years on, like opportunity zones and social impact bonds, done. We're this close on [opioids](#), we're this close on our infrastructure bills, so I really feel like we've had an enormously productive legislature, and it's making*

an [enormously positive difference](#) in people's lives, which is why we have these jobs."

**On the state of civil society:**

*"The deinstitutionalization of critical, core institutions of civil society are under duress right now, not just government. As people, we have to do more on our own, with our families, and our communities, and our churches, and our governments, and every other institution to build up those institutions and teach our kids how important these institutions are. **As a conservative, I believe we need to do more to free up space for civil society to reassert itself in its rightful place in that big expansive space between ourselves and our government,** which is where we lead our lives. Go to Janesville. I can tell you the Rotarians, the Optimists, the Kiwanis, the Key Club, the Golden Key guys, all the groups—that's civil society— and these things are shrinking, they're deinstitutionalizing, and we need to do more as a society and a culture to breathe life back into those things...as a limited government conservative, I want to make sure that I preserve that space so the government doesn't try and encroach upon it and push it out and deinstitutionalize it. But also as a conservative, we need to stand up for things we believe in and make sure that we are civil with one another as we engage in a public debate. That identity politics and tribalism is an affront to that."*

**Note:** In July, Speaker Ryan discussed this issue at length with Jonah Goldberg at the American Enterprise Institute. You can watch that discussion [here](#).